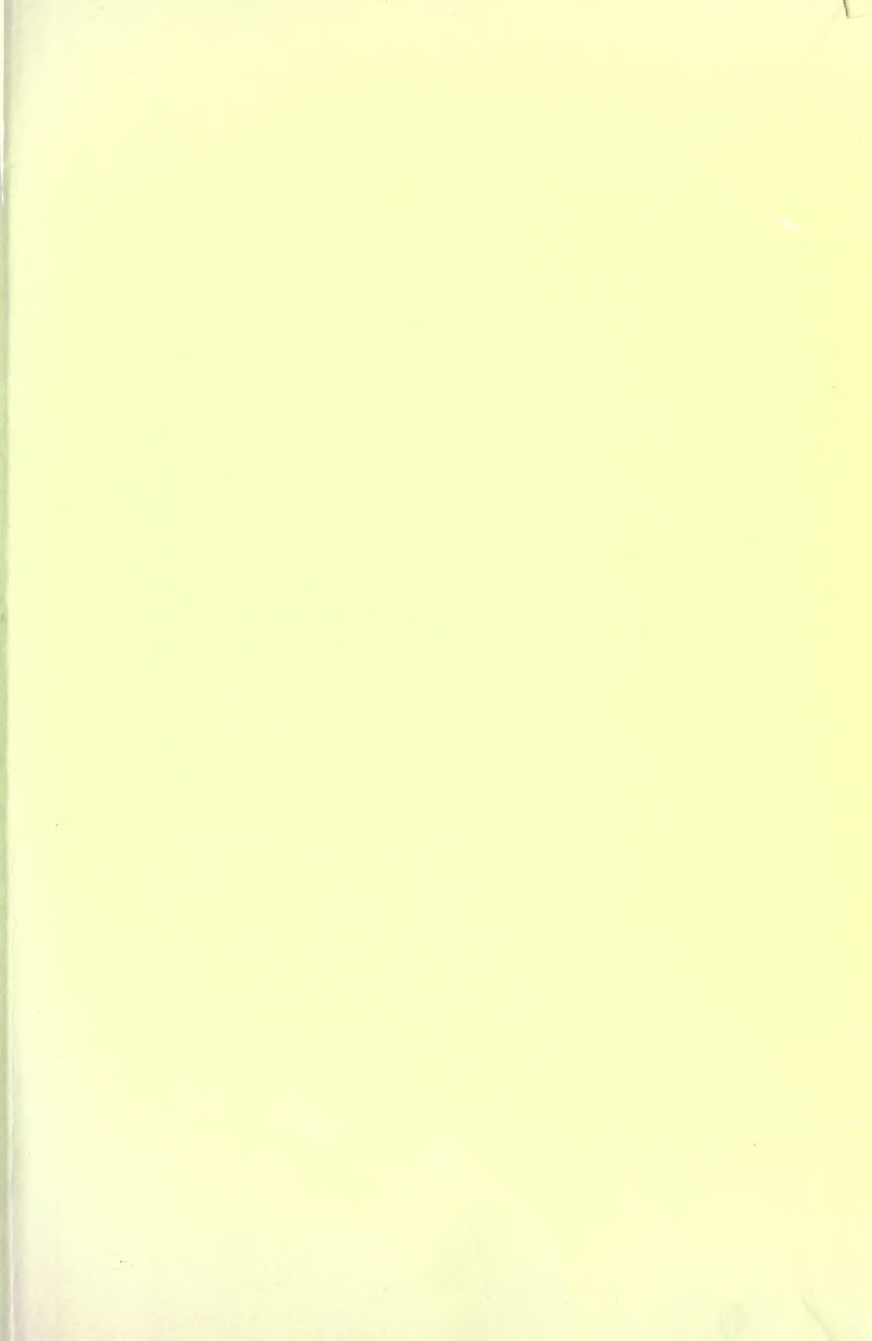


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# THE APOSTLES' CREED





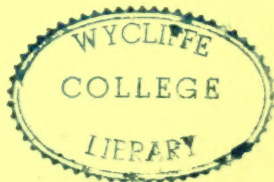
# THE APOSTLES' CREED

SIX LECTURES GIVEN IN  
WESTMINSTER ABBEY

BY H. C. BEECHING, M.A., D.LITT.

CANON OF WESTMINSTER

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## ADVERTISEMENT

THE lectures in this volume were delivered on the Fridays of this Lent to the congregation, of "all sorts and conditions," assembled at evensong in Westminster Abbey. Their purpose was catechetical and not critical; so that no attempt was made to refer to authorities. In sending them to press I have added a reference here and there, where I remembered a particular debt; and my general debt to my friends the theologians of this generation, though obvious enough, I take this opportunity of thankfully acknowledging. In the first lecture a paragraph or two has been borrowed from the preface to a volume of sermons published in 1892, and long out of print.

My hope, in seeking for these lectures a new term of life, is that they may minister, in however humble a degree, to that exposition of the Christian faith, in terms comprehensible to the age, which every age whose intelligence is awake is entitled to demand from its clergy.

H. C. B.

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S DAY, 1905.

OM̄P SEM̄P D̄S QUI NULLI NOS INFERRE MAN-  
DASTI QUOD NOBIS NON OPTAMUS INFERRI  
PRAESTA QUAESUMUS UT NEC FINGAMUS ALIIS  
NEC ALIORUM FICTIONIBUS INLUDAMUR PER.

*Sacr. Leonian.*

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The Apostles' Creed is the baptismal confession of the Roman Church in the second century, with certain additions. What is meant by "I believe"? According to the Gospels, faith is confidence in the power, wisdom, holiness, and love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. This explanation enables us to understand that faith is not a special theological grace vouchsafed to a few, but a free gift open to all; and also that it saves us by changing our nature into the likeness of what we worship. The faith of intelligent creatures must be capable of expression in a creed; and creeds are necessary in order that faith may first realise, and then communicate, itself. Also, by expressing clearly the attributes of the Divine object of faith, creeds help to determine character. All faith rests upon experience, and Christian faith to-day must rest upon personal experience of the Divine power and love, verifying the testimony of the Church in all ages; but now also, as in the first and every age, faith must be content to go beyond experience. The final proof of the reality of the Divine object of faith must be its recognisable influence upon the lives of believers. . . . . 1

## LECTURE II

The truth expressed in the first clause of the Creed is that the Creator and Ruler of the world is a being who is rightly

spoken of as "Father." This is a truth not of scientific discovery, but of revelation ; which, as confirmed by Christ, the Christian Church inherits from the Church of the Old Covenant. It tells us nothing as to the *method* of creation, for which the appeal is to the natural sciences. (We may illustrate the prophetic revelations by the intuitions of our own poets.) Nevertheless, belief in God's presence in the world of nature remains "a venture" of faith, because of apparently conflicting experiences. A more unimpeachable witness is found in human nature, compared with which the external world drops into the background as more or less rough material for the evolution of mankind. The chief evidence for the truth of God's fatherly love must be sought in the spiritual experiences of good men, and in the spiritual constitution of their nature. The doctrine of God's providence follows from that of His creation ; but, like that of the creation, it comes to us from Scripture, the main subject of which is the gradual working out of God's good purpose in Israel, and through Israel in the world. This clause was probably framed to meet the heresy of Marcion. . . . 20

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The historical appendix to the second clause of the Creed is important, first, as laying stress upon the fact that our redemption was not accomplished by a mere word from heaven, but through our Lord's incarnation and suffering; and, in the second place, as insisting that the Redeemer in whom we believe is the Christ of history, and not a mere ideal projected by our faith. The Church of England does not accept a theory of "development" which makes it unimportant whether Jesus was, and did, what the records describe; on the contrary, it appeals to Holy Scripture as the warrant for its belief. It follows that any questions raised about details of the Gospel story, as, for example, about our Lord's birth of a virgin, must be decided upon the evidence. The statements concerning the "descent into hell," the "ascension into heaven," and the "session at the right hand of the Father" must be interpreted without any stress on their spatial phraseology. The "judgment" is both "of quick and dead," present and future, and is peculiarly the province of our Lord, as "Son of Man." 51

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The third section of the Creed expresses our belief in the third Person of the Blessed Trinity. And here caution is required not to make the Christian faith tri-theistic, by regarding the Holy Spirit's activity as independent of the Father and the Son. The doctrine of the Church is the doctrine of Scripture, viz. that the Father comes to us through the Son in the Spirit. In regard to both creation and redemption, as the Son is the "express image" of the Father's will, so the Spirit is the agent by which this will is carried out. The Holy Spirit is the giver of all the gifts of life, from lowest to highest; He is the Spirit of power, and truth, and love. The witness of His presence, though no longer marvellous as in the first age, is a real experience in the Church. . . . . 69

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The remainder of the Creed does not consist of additional articles of the Christian faith, for our faith stands only in God, revealed to us as Father, Son, and Spirit. What follows is a section (parallel to the historical section attached to the second clause) explanatory of the mode of the Spirit's operation. It expresses our belief that through the presence of the Holy Spirit among men there is a Church, there is forgiveness of sins, there is resurrection and eternal life. As the Church consists of those whom the Holy Spirit inspires to acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus, it is "holy," and this holiness of election is intended to issue in holiness of life. Further, as depending only on the presence of the One Spirit, the Church is "Catholic," *i.e.* a single whole; transcending all human limitations of sex, race, or epoch. Further, it has "communion with the saints"; in other words, death does not divide, though it conceals, the members of the Church who are in heaven from those who are still on earth. From the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church there follows also the forgiveness of sins, which, as explained by Christ, is a spiritual healing. "The resurrection of the body and the life everlasting" imply that the regenerate nature will survive physical death in whatever constitutes its entirety as a personal being; and enjoy for ever the revealed presence of God. . . . .

# THE APOSTLES' CREED

## I

*Jesus said, Have faith in God.*—MARK xi. 22.

THESE lectures upon the Apostles' Creed are intended to be explanatory, and not critical, but they may begin with a few words about its history. What is its origin? There was a legend, as old as the fourth century, and taught in England right up to the Reformation, that the Creed received its title of the *Apostles' Creed* from having been composed by the Apostles themselves—each (so the story went) contributing one clause. Of course that is nothing but a tale. As a matter of fact the Apostles' Creed was framed as the baptismal confession of the Roman Church. It goes almost without saying that when a convert received baptism he had to make a profession<sup>1</sup> of his faith, and in the Roman Church he made it in the form of what is now called the Apostles' Creed. The Creed can be traced as far back as the middle of the

<sup>1</sup> Acts viii. 37 (interpolated).

second century ; and as it cannot be traced earlier, that is accepted as its probable date. But this Roman baptismal creed, though in its main essentials our present Apostles' Creed, differs from it in a few respects. It omits certain clauses—*e.g.* the descent into hell, and the communion of saints. And that, at first sight, may be puzzling. We may find it hard to understand how a creed could receive additions, because our notion of a creed is of something absolutely unalterable. We must remember, however, that even now the Apostles' Creed does not contain all the truths we believe about God and Christ. It contains, for instance, no explicit reference to the Atonement. And so, although the Roman Creed rehearsed the points of belief which that Church considered of most vital importance, other Churches, when they borrowed the Roman formula, were within their rights in adding other articles of the faith which special circumstances made important for them. Our Nicene Creed is another example of an enlarged baptismal creed. It is the Creed of Jerusalem revised by the addition of phrases from the creed drawn up by the Council of Nicæa.

The chief additions to the old Roman confession are thought by scholars to have been made in Southern Gaul about the middle of the

fifth century, though one or two phrases are later still. It was the old form of the creed that was brought to England from Rome by Augustine, and the enlarged form did not find its way here till the ninth century: it will be interesting, therefore, to hear it in the form in which our own forefathers used to recite it; and you will agree that though the additions afterwards made have their interest, yet there is a simplicity and force about the older form such as we are accustomed to in the older type of Roman collect:

I believe in God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord, who was born from the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate, and buried; the third day He rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of the Father; thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. And in the Holy Ghost, holy Church, remission of sins, resurrection of the flesh.

We shall be considering the articles of this Creed in the lectures that follow, and we shall be able to discuss the additions as we come to them: to-day let us occupy ourselves with the first words, “ I believe.” What is Christian belief?



The first point to notice is that Christian belief is not belief *about* God, but belief *in* God ; it is a personal relation of two spirits. Jesus said, "Have faith in God"; and we reply, "*I believe in God.*" Of course Christians do believe something *about* God. We believe that God is Almighty, and the Maker of heaven and earth ; we believe that Jesus Christ was born and died and rose again. But if that were all, the Creed would run, "I believe that there is a God, who is the Father Almighty." But it says, "I believe *in* God the Father, and *in* Jesus Christ His only Son, and *in* the Holy Ghost." And we know what "to believe *in*" means. It means "to put one's trust in." And so we say in the Creed, "I put my trust in the Christian's God—a God who is Father and Son and Spirit ; I give Him my reverence, my obedience, my worship." It is significant that the *Quicunque vult* substitutes the word "worship" for "believe in." "The Catholic faith is this—that we *worship* one God in trinity, and trinity in unity." And that is why the recitation of the Creed occupies so prominent a position in Divine Service. It is a solemn declaration by the company of the faithful of the relation in which they stand to God, as He has revealed Himself. It explains and justifies the service ;

it explains praise and prayer, supplication and thanksgiving. Our first point, then, is that Christian belief is not the bare belief that there is a God—"the devils also believe and tremble"; it is a personal disposition of trust and love and obedience and worship—the human spirit bowing itself down, and in that action lifting itself up, to acknowledge the Divine Spirit.

If we wish to understand what "faith" implies and includes, we should go through the Gospel stories, and watch the process by which our Lord called out His disciples' faith in God, as the Father was revealed in Himself. We see that He elicited by degrees a growing confidence in His *power*. "Why are ye fearful?" He said to them in the storm on the Sea of Galilee: "have ye not yet *faith*?"—*i.e.* have you not yet learned confidence in Me? And to St. Peter He said, "O thou of little faith! wherefore didst thou *doubt*?"—*i.e.* doubt My power to protect you. Again, He aroused in them a growing confidence in His *wisdom*. He answered their difficulties. They heard Him reply to the questions of the Pharisees; they listened to His addresses in the synagogues and on the hillsides. And again, He called out in them a growing confidence in His *holiness*. They were witnesses of the power He possessed to forgive

sins ; to cast out evil spirits ; to change the nature of all, even of the hardened publican, if they would but come to Him for the spirit of a new life. So that when it was suggested to the disciples that they too should leave Him like the fickle crowds, St. Peter cried out, " Lord, to whom should we go ? Thou hast the words of *eternal life*." Their faith had grown in His holiness. And through all this *power* and *wisdom* and *holiness* there shone what drew their confidence more than all—viz. His *love*. They learned confidence in His love, and that drew their love in return.

What, then, the first disciples meant by *believing in Jesus Christ* was having confidence in His power, His wisdom, His holiness, and His love ; and this confidence was a growing confidence ; it deepened with each new experience, until the conviction was forced from them that such power and wisdom and holiness and love could not but be Divine, and they made the great confession, " Thou art the Son of the living God."

This recollection of what belief in Christ meant for the first disciples will help us to see our way through certain difficulties that are sometimes raised.

1. As to the nature of religious belief. We



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can see clearly, in the case of the Apostles, that their *faith* was not a special theological faculty, but the ordinary human power of confidence working through love, just as a child's faith in his father or a pupil's faith in his master is a confidence working through love. We can see this clearly, because the disciples' faith in Jesus Christ began by being faith in His power and love before those qualities were seen to be Divine. Their faith increased certainly both in breadth and depth, but between the first attraction that drew Peter from his nets and the last declaration of his worship upon the shores of Gennesaret there was no breach of continuity.

But if this is so, if our faith in God is no other faculty than our faith in our own best men, only deepened in proportion to the depth of the object on which it is directed, what, it may be asked, does St. Paul mean when he tells us that faith comes to us by God's grace, and that no man can say Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Spirit? Does not this mean that "faith" is a special theological grace which God gives to this man and denies to that other? That has been said. But if we have learned anything of religion by personal experience, we know that God's Spirit is always striving with us, always ready and eager to help and correct us at the

least surrender of our human will ; if we know anything of ourselves, we know that we can do *nothing* good without Him ; and if that is so, if it is of God's grace that we know what any goodness is, and are attracted to it and love it, we cannot but attribute to the same Divine grace the power to respond to the attraction of Christ. Faith in Christ is of grace, because faith in any goodness is of grace. Every good gift is from above.

2. Another question to which the faith of the disciples gives an answer is, Why does faith *save* us ? We speak of "saving faith." "By grace are ye saved through faith," says St. Paul. We shall find no difficulty about the meaning of this if we remember that *faith* means "faith in God as His Son Jesus Christ revealed Him." "God saves us through faith in God." It is always safer to speak not of "faith" simply, but of "faith in God." St. Paul speaks much of Abraham's "faith," but behind all he says is the great text on which he relies : "Abraham believed *God*, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness." *Christian* faith, then, is faith in Christ as the Son of God ; and how such faith saves no one can fail to understand who will observe how this wonderful power of loving trust operates. A child

*believes* in his father, trusts his wisdom, power, and love. And what is the result? The child's nature is changed into the likeness of what it admires and honours; he is saved by his faith in his father from certain terrible sins into which he might otherwise have fallen. So it is with a teacher and his pupil: the spirit of the teacher passes upon the faithful pupil, and insensibly moulds him; he too is saved from certain errors of doctrine or life by the influence of his master. If, then, a man has faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and loves Him, trusts Him, adores Him, as the wisdom and power and love and holiness of God, will not he too be changed by secret influences into the image of what he worships with all his heart and mind and strength?

3. And then there is the question so often heard: Why may we not be content to worship in heart and mind without putting our faith into words? Why may we not believe in God without putting our belief into a creed? Why make the confession, since Divine truth must always elude our human modes of speech. We have all heard questions of the sort. Nothing was so marked in a recent newspaper discussion on Christian "belief" as the tendency to distinguish *faith* from *dogma*, and while approving the

one to heap all sorts of contempt upon the other. But the simple answer is, that the faith of an intelligent being must be capable of expression in words ; and even though the Divine Object of our faith must always escape the limits of our definitions, yet it is possible to describe the attributes of the God in whom we trust, and every such description is a dogma. To teach little children that "God is love" is to give utterance to a dogma. But passing that by, we may see two or three reasons why confessions of our faith are useful and necessary.

(i) The first reason is that faith can hardly be said to have come to birth till it has uttered itself in speech. Our Lord was with His disciples a long time before he questioned them about their belief in Him, and all this time their faith was growing secretly ; but at last the time came when, if their faith was to hold its own through the Betrayal and Crucifixion that were approaching, it must come into the light and air, and draw vital breath and find its strength ; and so our Lord asked the disciples, "Whom say ye that I am ?" And then St. Peter made the great confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" ; and so far from resenting Peter's dogma, our Lord solemnly declared that on the rock of such a faith, at last come to

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the birth, He would build His eternal Church. Creeds are necessary, then, in order that faith may realise itself.

(ii) Creeds are necessary for what the ancient Fathers called a *symbol*—i.e. a common watch-word, an ensign, a token of membership in the company of Christians. For not every one who worships God is a Christian; and so Christians must make clear what they believe about God, and what they do not believe about Him; and this right belief about God must be taught to their children, and taught by their missionaries to the heathen. If a man thinks of the Creed as being a description of the being and attributes of the God whom he worships as God has revealed them, he will recognise a vital necessity for it in the Christian society.

(iii) But the objection to creeds sometimes takes another form. People say the real business of religion is with *character* and *action*. It does not matter what you *think* about God so long as you live a good life. And that may sound a sensible position to take up, until the question is asked, What is meant by a good life? For if a good life means a life after God's commandments (as it does), it must matter very much with what sort of attributes you credit the God whom you worship, since His



commandments will be the reflection of these attributes. Elijah and Jezebel would both have said that they worshipped God ; but their gods had different attributes, and so their creeds were different ; and the difference in creed made a marked difference in character. Or, to take a more modern instance, a Mohammedan and a Christian would say they worship the same God, but they believe different things about Him. And does the difference in creed make no difference in character ? Or again, take the Covenanters and other sects of Christians who have believed that the thoughts about the nature and will of God held by some of the Hebrew judges were binding upon Christians. Did their bloodthirsty creed not make them bloodthirsty in character ? We know that it did. Of all the idle sayings, then, that men repeat after each other, there is none with so little wisdom in it as the saying that a man's character is independent of his creed, supposing that his creed is a real expression of his belief. Of course a man who does not believe what he says he believes will not find his creed affect his character ; but that is because what he calls his creed is not his creed. He may say Sunday after Sunday, "I believe in God," when perhaps what he really ought to say is,

“I believe in Mammon,” or “I believe in myself.”

4. But now, to pass to a different question, suppose it should be said to us, “You have rehearsed to-day very solemnly your belief in God, the Creator, the Redeemer, the Sanctifier; but how do you know it is true? What are the grounds on which you hold your creed?” What should we say? Well, let us do as we have done with previous questions—look back to the time of the Apostles, and see how they arrived at their creed. When they confessed Jesus to be the Son of God, what did their belief rest on? The answer is, It rested upon experience. “Lord,” they said, “to whom should we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure that Thou art the Holy One of God.” It was the *experience* that begot the *belief*. Our Lord, we are told, on one occasion when their faith was low, catechised them on the miracle of feeding the multitude, and concluded with the question, “How is it that ye have no faith?”—*i.e.* after what you have *experienced*? And on another occasion he said to them, “Have you not *yet* faith?—not yet, after all you have seen and heard and done?”

And this is what we should expect if faith

in God is only a special example of that confidence and love which we are familiar with in our ordinary lives. A child soon learns to trust his father after a few experiences of his affection and wisdom and strength, but still it is experience on which the trust reposes ; and in later life we learn caution, and limit our confidence in a man to particular qualities that we have observed in him. And so it is with our faith in God. All true faith in God rests upon experience of some sort. When we are young we learn our Creed by heart, and are in the same sort of mental and spiritual attitude towards it as the disciples when they were first attracted to Christ. For the Creed is wonderfully attractive ; it is good news that we hear about a Creator and a Redeemer and a Sanctifier ; and we say we believe it. But if as we grow in years we give in our adhesion to it with heart and mind, it will be because of certain experiences we have had which have convinced us of its truth. A great part of this experience will always be the Christian life of our parents and those with whom our lot is cast. If those who teach us our Creed are themselves living a life that we can see to be beautiful, and can guess to be Divine, we too are led to believe in our fathers' God. But in addition we all



have experiences of our own. We follow, as it were, with the Apostles through Galilee, and hear the wonderful and comfortable words, and see the deeds of compassion and might, and our own hearts burn within us as He talks with us by the way. And then perhaps the experience deepens. We have always said our prayers from childhood, but at last most extreme need drives us to pray. We lose some one by death—a parent, or a brother or sister, or dear friend; or we fall into sin, and feel the unassuagable longing for forgiveness. And *“power is with us in the night.”* And from that opening of heaven (as it seemed) we date a new belief in God. We have each our own very different lives, full of a great variety of circumstances; but I am convinced that the faith in God of every one of us is built up from what experiences we have ourselves had of the power and love of God. And then the testimony of the Church in the first age, and the verification of its testimony in an unbroken succession of Christian lives down to our own day, come in to fortify and corroborate the testimony from our own personal experience.

But if that is so—if Christian belief rests upon experience—what is meant by the popular opinion that faith is a belief against evidence? What

is meant is not, or should not be, that anything is believed which is contrary to evidence—that would be irrational; but that there are other facts, of which also we have experience, which we find it difficult to harmonise with those facts upon which our faith rests, and which therefore we have to leave for the present unreconciled. We find this in the faith of the first disciples. Think what an enormous stumbling-block to their faith it must have been, that the religious leaders, whom they had been brought up to honour, rejected Jesus. Put yourself in the position of the poor man who was asked, How can you believe in some one whom none of the rulers believe in? What was his reply? It was to put aside that fact, to which he had not the clue, and rest his faith on what to him was matter of incontrovertible experience. “This thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.” In every age and in every outlook upon life there will be what seem to us irreconcilable facts, which we must be content to leave unreconciled, and rest satisfied with the best solution we can get (the problem of the existence of evil in a world governed by a God both good and almighty is the main example of such a difficulty); and the holding fast to faith in face of such difficulties does give it the aspect

of a *venture*, of a belief against evidence ; but in reality it is always a belief upon evidence still more cogent. We say, like the blind man, there may be a great deal in what you allege against us—we know not ; but this thing we know—God has been merciful to us and blessed us.

5. One thing more. Suppose the question is raised as to the historical character of the Gospel story—not as to its general historical character, which is beyond cavil, but as to details in it, even details which have always seemed of great theological consequence. Is there any reason why we should be distressed if the evidence for believing this or that detail is shown by experts to be less cogent than that for the bulk of the narrative ? In other words, does our faith in Christ to-day rest so immediately upon the Scripture documents that the uncertainty, which the lapse of time must always bring, as to facts having happened just as they are said to have happened must communicate itself to our faith ? It is really a very important question for Christians of our own generation, because the discovery of various strata of tradition in the Gospel story has obliged us to distinguish degrees of certainty in the facts narrated. Suppose a fact of great importance is recorded by St. Luke and St. Matthew, but not by

St. Mark and St. John, and St. Paul gives no sign that he was aware of it—clearly we have here a very interesting question in literary criticism ; but unless we can know (as we cannot know now) the sources from which the two evangelists drew it, we cannot make out such a strong case in its favour as we can for a fact like the Resurrection, which has the attestation of all the historical witnesses. And so the question arises, Does the faith of the Church rest to-day, as simply as it once rested, on the original witnesses ? Does our faith in Christ, as the incarnate Son of God, waver every time a doubt is raised which we have not (and all these centuries after cannot have) the means to meet as decisively as we could wish ? In attempting an answer, let us turn to St. Paul. St. Paul, it will be remembered, when the Resurrection of Christ was impugned, made a direct appeal to historical witness : there were witnesses still living who had seen Jesus after He rose from the dead ; and the Church can still appeal through him to the same witnesses. But we shall also find that for once that St. Paul appeals to historical testimony, he appeals many times to the witness of the Spirit of Christ in the Church, that is, in the regenerated lives of Christians. “The Lord,” he says,

“is the Spirit”; and the Spirit of the Lord in the Church is witnessed to by the Christ-like life of Christians. “Even though we have known Christ after the flesh,” he says, “yet now we know Him so no more.” We know Him in His new creation, the Church. “If any man is *in Christ*, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new.” As long, then, as the Spirit of Christ is manifest in His Church we need not take too much to heart the difficulties raised by historical criticism—they have their place and their interest, and they must be handled by those competent to handle them; but the idea that our faith in Christ could be affected, after an evidence of two thousand years, by any results of literary criticism is one so extraordinary that it must make the angels laugh, if they do not weep.



## II

*To us there is One God, the Father, of whom are all things,  
and we unto Him.*—1 COR. viii. 6.

IN its first section the Apostles' Creed makes two statements about the God in whom we trust—that He is the one Sovereign Maker and Ruler of the world, and that He has a good purpose in it. God is all-governing; and He is Father. The clause "Maker of heaven and earth" was a late addition, rendered necessary by the fact that at the time it was added both the preceding words—"Father" and "Almighty"—had somewhat changed in meaning. In the second century to speak of God as Father implied that He was Creator—He was spoken of, *e.g.*, as "Father of the universe," "Father of things sensible and visible"; but then the Christians who recited the words, "I believe in God the Father," meant not only "I believe that God is the loving Creator of the world," but "I believe that God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"; and as the word "Father" came to be less generally used for "Creator," the latter sense prevailed, and so the

fact of creation required and received a separate assertion.

And this change in the sense of "Father" was accompanied by a change in the sense of the other epithet. The word<sup>1</sup> introduced from the Bible into the Greek version of the Creed, which was the earliest version, means "all-ruling" or "all-sovereign," and so the original declaration was, "I believe in God the all-ruling Father"; which would mean, "I believe in God, who both made and governs all things for our good." But this Greek word which means "all-ruling" was rendered into Latin by the word *omnipotens*, which meant simply "almighty," with no special reference to the world; and so, when the Latin text supplanted the Greek, a clause was needed to apply what had become a merely general and abstract truth (that God was almighty) to the actual fact of the existing universe.

As the clause runs, whether in its original or its enlarged form, the point of emphasis is that the God in whom we believe, the Maker and Sustainer and Governor of the world and men, is a being who is rightly called Father. "I believe in God, the all-sovereign Father." This is a truth, not of human discovery, but of revelation. Let

<sup>1</sup> παντοκράτωρ. See appendix in Westcott's *Historic Faith*, p. 225; McGiffert's *Apostles' Creed*, p. 108.

us consider it first in regard to the world of nature.

1. The Christian as he looks out upon the world believes it to be the work and the care of one mind, and that a mind which has a goodwill to men. This belief we inherit from the Jewish Church, which put it in the forefront of its Sacred Scriptures. The story of Creation that stands at the opening of the Bible differs from the stories of Creation which we find in the early traditions of all other peoples, including those allied to the Hebrew stock, in one main respect—that it attributes it to the work of a single and good God. Scholars tell us that the Israelitish tradition of the Creation derives ultimately from the Babylonian—that the resemblances between the story in Genesis and the story on the Babylonian tablets are too close to be the result of accident; but where the Hebrew account differs is in the statement that God was “in the beginning,” and that He called the world into existence by His word. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” And this teaching of the Old Testament, that behind the universe we see is the creating will of a good God, was confirmed by the teaching of our Lord, and has passed into our Creed. Observe that Christ taught us nothing, and the



Creed is equally silent, upon the *method* of God's creation. For our knowledge of the method we appeal to the best science of our own day, just as the pious Jew appealed to the best tradition of his day. If natural science teaches that higher and more beautiful forms of life sprang into being out of lower and less beautiful forms, and that man is the last stage of an upward process, we acquiesce; but we none the less attribute the creation of each and all, first and last, to the mind and will, the power and love, of God. The increasing knowledge which we gain of the world by the use of more and more skilfully contrived instruments does not conflict with the knowledge of God which we have received through the revelation of Himself to holy men.

People ask sometimes how this revelation of God's energy of love at work behind the worlds was conveyed to the prophets—how, for instance, the revelation was received which is embodied in the magnificent appeal:

Seek Him that maketh the seven stars  
and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death  
into the morning, and maketh the day dark  
with night: that calleth for the waters of  
the sea, and poureth them out upon the  
face of the earth: The Lord is His name.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Amos v. 8.

We cannot tell. St. Paul connected revelations with visions, and related his own experience of a revelation so given (2 Cor. xii. 1) ; but there might be revelation by other methods. We can, however, illustrate such a revelation to ourselves by the intensity of conviction that possessed such clear-eyed souls as Francis of Assisi, that upon all the phenomena of nature there remained the print of God's creating finger. To our own poet Wordsworth nature was but the garment for a Supreme Spirit "who moved through all things," and revealed His presence in their joy and beauty. Wordsworth did not reason about the Divine origin of nature ; he was assured of it. In every form of natural being he discerned an active principle :

Spirit that knows no insulated spot,  
No chasm, no solitude ; from link to link  
It circulates, the soul of all the worlds.

We saw in the first lecture that our faith in God must rest upon experience of some kind. There are certainly those to whom the sights and sounds of nature make no direct spiritual appeal confirmatory of the belief in the presence of an Eternal Spirit behind all the phenomena of sense. But also there are those to whom this appeal of beauty and grandeur comes home ; and to those who can receive it, it speaks with

no uncertain voice. And yet even this faith partakes of the nature of a venture, because the experience is not realised at all times ; and also because there are other experiences which seem to conflict with it. It is not difficult to agree with the Psalmist when he says of the Creator that fire and hail, snow and vapours, wind and storm, fulfil His word ; but it is difficult to realise that that Divine and all-sovereign word expresses always the will of a Father. The 107th Psalm, after describing a storm at sea, calls upon us to praise the Lord for His goodness—"for He maketh the storm to cease, so that the waves thereof are still ; then are they glad because they are at rest, and so He bringeth them into the haven where they would be." But storms do not always end so ; ships do not always reach their haven. From the first, then, there was always in nature a margin of unreconciled experience—a problem of pain and death—which the good and wise sought to understand, and to which they gave such interpretation as we find in the Book of Job ; but the existence of this problem and the difficulty of meeting it did not lead them to deny the great truth of which they were more convinced than of any merely sensible experience—that

God was in the world, and that He had a good purpose in it for His people. In our own generation the problem of pain and death received a large access of strength from Mr. Darwin's theory that the principle by which the evolution of species has been carried on in the world was natural selection, and the survival of the fittest ; and that theory, or discovery, was met in all sorts of ways by various apologists, who strove to harmonise it with the belief in a good God ; some pointing out, for instance, that a pain which subserved the gain of the world was akin to sacrifice. It was in reference to this increased difficulty of maintaining belief in a *God of love*, on the basis of a contemplation of external nature alone, that our great poet Tennyson taught us to rely mainly for the support of our faith on the revelation God had given of Himself in man ; especially in the *power to love*. Speaking of his own faith in God, he says :

I found Him not in world or sun,  
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye ;  
Nor through the questions men may try,  
The petty cobwebs we have spun :

If e'er when faith had fallen asleep,  
I heard a voice "believe no more"  
And heard an ever-breaking shore  
That tumbled in the Godless deep ;

A warmth within the breast would melt  
 The freezing reason's colder part,  
 And like a man in wrath, the *heart*  
 Stood up and answered "I have felt."<sup>1</sup>

And Tennyson goes on to tell us that it was after he had found God in direct intercourse with his own spirit that he came to realise how through nature He was moulding mankind :

Then was I as a child that cries,  
 But crying knows his father near ;  
 And what I am beheld again  
 WHAT IS, and no man understands ;  
 And out of darkness came the hands  
 That reach through nature moulding men.

It is interesting to remember that in the same poem Tennyson tells us how he too, like the prophets of old, received in a trance a revelation of God's presence in the universe ; conveyed to him, as he surmised, though of this he came to doubt, through the agency of his departed friend :

The [his] living soul was flashed in mine  
 And I in this [his] was wound, and whirled  
 About empyreal heights of thought,  
 And came on THAT WHICH IS, and caught  
 The deep pulsations of the world.<sup>2</sup>

2. But such experiences are for the few. For most of us the prime witness to God lies in our

<sup>1</sup> *In Memoriam*, 124.    <sup>2</sup> *Ib.* 95. The pronouns were altered.



own being. This direct belief, this upward look from the soul to God, is indeed the very centre and core of faith, from which it may spread over all else. If we turn once more for illustration to those Psalms of the Hebrew saints which enshrine their response of faith to the revelation God made of Himself in the prophets—although we shall find here and there a Psalm which acknowledges with joy the presence of God in nature—yet for the most part they are confessions of what God had done for their own souls, individually or as a people. They are shouts of praise or litanies of lamentation to the “Shepherd of Israel.”

Many a time have they fought against me from my youth up, may Israel now say. Yea, many a time have they vexed me from my youth up, but they have not prevailed against me. The plowers plowed upon my back, and made long furrows, but the righteous Lord hath hewn the snares of the ungodly in pieces (129).

Out of the deep have I called unto Thee, O Lord ; Lord, hear my voice. O let thine ears consider well the voice of my complaint. If thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O

Lord, who may abide it? But there is mercy with Thee, therefore shalt Thou be feared (130).

I am well pleased that the Lord hath heard the voice of my prayer. I found trouble and heaviness, and I called upon the name of the Lord. O Lord, I beseech Thee, deliver my soul. The Lord preserveth the simple. I was in misery, and He helped me (116).

And there is one Psalm, the 139th, which strikes a more reflective note, and except in a moment of the actual spiritual experience comes home more directly to our analytical minds to-day.

I will praise Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are Thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well. . . . There is not a word in my tongue but Thou, O Lord, knowest it altogether.

Whatever may be the truth about spiritual experiences which are now only matters of memory, here in our constant selves we have a fact of which we are not suspicious, and which we can take stock of at any time. We can say *I*, and as we say *I*, we are conscious



of a living, thinking, willing, loving person—"fearfully and wonderfully made"; and when our church tells us that we are the children of God, made "in His own image," our hearts find it very credible; and we raise our thoughts to God as a living, thinking, willing, loving being, the perfection of all that we see to be best in ourselves at our best, the *Father* of the spirits of men.

3. To turn, now, to that side of our profession of faith which is expressed by the epithet "all-ruling," the belief that God orders the course of the world, and has set before it a noble end. This is involved in the very fact of creation. Creation by a good God carries with it the ideas of purpose in creating and providence in bringing this purpose to fulfilment. A God who is Father must have at heart the highest welfare of His children; and one who is Almighty will pursue that welfare till it is secured. This faith in God's providence, to which our hearts thus give in their assent, we as a matter of fact owe—like the rest of our belief in God—to the revelation in the Scriptures, of which the main topic is the gradual working out of God's good purpose in Israel, and through Israel for the world. The Jewish prophets laid their chief stress on Jehovah's

*mercy* and *truth*, or, as we should say, His *love* and *faithfulness*. Having promised to bless the world by their means, He brought them out of Egypt, guarded them in the wilderness, subdued before them the land of Canaan, and by judges and kings and prophets trained them in His ways; ever holding out before them some new hope, if they would be willing and obedient. From the first, emphasis is laid on the fatherly care and zeal of Jehovah. His very name is said by some scholars to imply the limitlessness of His goodwill to His people: the sense being not “I am that I am,” but “I will be what I will be.”<sup>1</sup> He was Jehovah “merciful and gracious, slow to anger, plenteous in goodness and truth.” How exquisitely, for instance, is God’s fatherly lovingkindness to Israel expressed in that ancient song in Deuteronomy xxxii. :

He found him in a desert land, and in a waste howling wilderness; He led him about, He instructed him; He kept him as the apple of His eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him.

<sup>1</sup> See Robertson Smith’s *Prophets of Israel*, p. 386.

And the prophets are full of assurances of God's continual love and pity, despite desperate ingratitude on the part of Israel. The evangelical prophet describes God as bearing all the troubles of His people. "In all their affliction *He* was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them; in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old."<sup>1</sup> Without any counting of the cost, the fatherly love of God pursued its purpose.

For us, this prophetic revelation of God's Fatherhood has been almost superseded by the revelation in Jesus Christ, who showed on the one hand the utmost that God's love would do and bear to bring man to his goal; while on the other He showed that man found his true life and happiness in responding to that divine love. But even so, even for us who believe in the Father not so much through the prophets as through the Son, faith still retains its character as a confidence which is less than proof, owing to the experiences that still remain unreconciled. Christ gave us no final solution of the problem how evil can exist in a world which is governed by the fatherly love of almighty power. And it is interesting to remember that the

<sup>1</sup> Isa. lxiii. 9.

baptismal creed of the Roman Church, which we are studying, was very probably framed to meet the teaching of the heretic Marcion, who in the second century found this very problem of evil his stone of stumbling. Believing that evil was a property of matter, he denied that the supreme God could be the God who created matter, and so he was forced to distinguish the creating God of the Old Testament from the redeeming God of the New Testament. The former he regarded as an inferior deity, just indeed, but not loving, who did His best, but was obliged to punish His creatures for disobedience; the latter was the supreme God who took pity on men and sent His Son to save them. Of course such a theory, which separated righteousness from love, justice from mercy, was no solution of the difficulty, and only made havoc of the Bible, by ignoring the tenderness of the God of the Old Testament and the holiness of the God of the New. Moreover, it destroyed all belief in the providence of God. A God who did not make mankind, and had no purpose in them, but simply took pity on them in a crisis, was entitled to such gratitude as would befit the Good Samaritan in our Lord's parable, but had no claim to obedience, or co-operation, or filial love. And so the Church would have none

of Marcion's explanations of the difficulty ; but expressed in clear words the truth of which it was sure, despite its difficulties—" I believe in God, the *all*-ruling Father."

The problem of the existence of evil in a world created by our Father, whatever its theoretical solution, is solved for each of us practically by the recognition of our own responsibility for the evil which we know we have ourselves caused and done. Our own faith in our Father's perfect love and wisdom is not lessened when we sin and repent, because we know that we have sinned against the pressure of His Spirit. It never occurs to us to blame God for our sin ; to do so would be false to our experience—I doubt if any of us could conscientiously accuse God of hardening our hearts, or say with the Persian poet :

O Thou, who didst with pitfall and with gin  
Beset the road I was to wander in,  
Thou wilt not with predestination round  
Enmesh, and then impute my fall to sin !

No, the words which meet our case are the words which Christ put into the mouth of the repentant prodigal, " Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." "*Father*, I have sinned."  
" I believe in God the Father."



### III

*Believe in God, believe also in Me.*—JOHN xiv. 1.

AND so the Creed passes from its first confession, “I believe in God the Father Almighty,” to its second—“I believe in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord.”

Manifestly, everybody must believe in God before he can believe in Jesus Christ in any deep sense ; for to say that “Jesus is the Son of God” already implies a belief in God. This was clearly true of the Christian converts from among the Jews, who were already worshippers of Jehovah ; and it was true also, though to a less extent, of the Greeks, as St. Paul recognised in his famous speech at Athens ; and it remains true of the converts from heathendom to-day.

In the mind of all men there is some recognition of a Creator Spirit, with whom they are led to identify the Spirit of Jesus. And so the progress of belief is logically from the first article to the second, from belief in God the Father and Creator to believe in Him whom the Father sent. At the same time, the belief in Jesus

at once reacts upon the belief in God. The heathen convert, though he may employ the same word for God as before, has very different thoughts about Him; he is taught to believe that the holiness and lovingkindness of Jesus are the holiness and lovingkindness of the Creator God; and even the pious Jew gained a new insight into what these great qualities meant—the mercy and truth which he had always held to be the attributes of Jehovah. The two beliefs therefore go together. First, I learn to believe in God the Father, who hath made me, and all the world; secondly, in God the Son, who hath redeemed me, and all mankind.

Our Lord's work, which the Catechism (following the Apostles) speaks of in one word as Redemption, is summed up in this Creed under three epithets, corresponding to the three epithets of God in the first clause. Jesus is described as (1) the Christ of God; (2) the Only Son of the Father; (3) our Lord—*i.e.* the Vicegerent of the All-sovereign Ruler. Let us take these three descriptions in order, so as to gain some clearness as to the view of our Lord's office and person which the Christian Church puts before us as the ground of our faith in Him; always remembering that it is



in Him that our faith is placed, and not in any propositions about Him.

1. We say, first, that Jesus is the Christ of God. By “Christ” is meant “the anointed”—*i.e.* consecrated—servant of God for the work of redemption, who was promised to the fathers. And in so saying, we express our belief in the general providence of God throughout history; His goodwill to men from the creation of the world. We express our belief that the redemption which Jesus effected, though it came at a definite epoch of the world’s history, was not an unexpected event, a sudden, isolated act of compassion on man’s misery, whether of the Creator Himself, or, as Marcion taught, of some higher and more beneficent deity; but was part of a process fore-ordained in the counsel of God from the beginning. We point back along the history of the chosen people to a long series of kings and prophets, whose lives and writings are recorded in the Old Testament Scriptures, and show how they were always looking forward to a Divine redemption, always desiring to see the days of the promised Deliverer.

It is most interesting to look back, and trace the slow development of this faith and hope, observing how the nature of the expected

redemption changed as the conception of the need deepened; how, first, it is a quite general faith that God, who had made a special covenant with the nation, would not be false to His promise, but would send them prosperity; and then, how, in a time of national trouble, it connects itself with the restoration of a new shoot to the kingly stock of David—David the good king, God's chosen son, anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows—and so becomes a vision of good government; a kingdom of righteousness, in which the weak things of the world shall have the protection they crave:

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the land. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is His name whereby He shall be called, "Jehovah is our righteousness."<sup>1</sup>

And, next, we observe how side by side with this hope for a righteous kingdom there grew up another hope, based upon the great fact of prophecy in the nation, and the knowledge

<sup>1</sup> Jer. xxiii. 5.

of God's will which prophecy brought—the hope that the knowledge of God's will should not be limited to exceptional men here and there gifted with a spirit of prophecy, but that the earth should be “full of the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea.” The Book of Numbers records the aspiration of Moses that all the Lord's people should be prophets; and in the mouth of Jeremiah (xxxi. 33) this aspiration has become the prophecy of a new covenant :

This is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put My law in their inward parts, and in their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people; and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the greatest of them even unto the least of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more.

And yet once more there grew up (at least in some minds) an expectation, which later found expression for itself in a code of sacrificial

ritual, that the anticipated conversion of the nation to the will of God, and the forgiveness of its sins, could not be effected without the sufferings of the innocent. The sin offering, by which the sins of the people were expiated, if it found its suggestion in this and that particular experience of the virtue of vicarious suffering,<sup>1</sup> yet looked forward still more confidently to the figure of an innocent Sufferer, by whose bearing of their iniquities the whole people should be justified, and by whose stripes they should be healed.

These were the great hopes that inspired the nation. The redemption of the people was seen to require a righteous life in a consecrated society, all the members of which should know the will of God—a society which for its very existence (as some surmised) presupposed some great initial act of sacrifice. How much of this varied content of Old Testament prophecy was still regarded as part of the conception of the Christ in the days of our Lord it is hard to say. The populace no doubt awaited a mere national hero of the type of Judas Maccabeus, to set up a new Davidic kingdom; but devout souls like the aged Simeon and

<sup>1</sup> See *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*, by G. Adam Smith, p. 168.

Anna must have had deeper conceptions of what a righteous kingdom meant; and we learn from St. John that John the Baptist, who came of a priestly stock, hailed Jesus as "the Lamb of God." But this idea of redemption through suffering could not have been widespread, for when Jesus Himself, on that famous journey to Emmaus, expounded to Cleopas and his companion the things concerning the Redeemer of Israel, among the things He showed them was the truth that the Christ must have suffered, and the idea was strange to them.

I need not stay to remind you how thoroughly this office of the Christ was fulfilled by Jesus of Nazareth. As a matter of fact, He did bring redemption by setting up a society in which the characteristic feature was a knowledge of God's will, issuing in a life of righteousness; and he did set it up by virtue of a great act of sacrifice. "By His stripes we were healed." Let me point out, before passing on, how the actual fact of the redemption of mankind in a consecrated society throws light on one aspect of the old prophecies which is sometimes a difficulty to modern readers. Readers of Old Testament prophecy are often puzzled by the difficulty of determining whether the



consecrated being spoken of is an individual or the whole people. The conception seems to have fluctuated, and with reason ; for what the prophets had at heart was the realisation of the Divine promise to their whole nation—that the nation should be, in fact as in election, a holy people. They conceived it as a unit : Israel—God's chosen servant, His beloved Son, His holy representative upon earth for the benefit of the world, the Christ to the nations ; and the further idea of an individual Servant and Son consecrated to redeem the collective servant and son emerged only at times and indistinctly. And so it is of the utmost interest and significance that as soon as the confession of Jesus as the Christ had fallen from the lips of St. Peter, our Lord at once announced the founding of the redeemed kingdom, with its distinctive attribute of legislation after the will of God—"Upon this rock I will build My congregation, My Israel ; and whatsoever thou shalt bind and loose on earth shall be bound and loosed in heaven." And by-and-by He gave this society a mission to the nations. So that we may express the truth about the Christ in this way : Jesus was the Christ to the Church ; and the Church, by virtue of the presence in it of the spirit of Jesus, is the Christ



to the world. The Christ, the consecrated Servant of God for man's redemption, comes to include all upon whom His Spirit passes. In the words of a great modern poet :

That one face, far from vanish, rather grows,  
And decomposes but to recompose,  
Become my universe that feels and knows.

And in speaking so Browning is but following the language of St. Paul. St. Paul tells us of God's eternal and final purpose in creation as "to gather together in one all things in Christ," to gather the universe into Christ ; meantime, he identifies Christ with the Church ; he speaks of Christ as the whole body of which Christians severally are members ; he speaks of the Church as the fulness of Christ—and though the truth which that identification expresses is not indeed the whole truth about the relation of our Lord to ourselves, it is yet a great and necessary truth, and it is the truth we confess in this first section of this second article of our Creed, as we say, "I believe in Jesus the Christ." We mean by that, "I have faith in One who has mediated to the Church, and through the evergrowing Church to the world, the Divine consecration ; One who has given to the Church, and through the Church to the world, the Divine blessing of a new life of righteousness"

in the Divine kingdom, by gathering all into Himself." "We are the Body of Christ, and severally members."

But, then, this conception needs safeguarding and supplementing, and our Creed supplements it in two ways—first, while recalling to us that as taken into the Body of Christ we are taken into His sonship, and accepted as "sons of God," it goes on to distinguish Christ's original Sonship from ours, by the epithet "only,"—"Jesus Christ His *only* Son"; and, secondly, it reminds us that Jesus is not Christ only, but Lord; that is to say, reverting to St. Paul's metaphor, not only the body of the consecrated Church, but also its Head. The distinction in the ideas associated with the terms "Christ" and "the Son of God"—the former term laying stress on the immanence of the Divine Spirit in the Church, the latter on its transcendence (to use the technical terms)—is well brought out in two passages of St. Paul—(1) Gal. ii. 20, "I have been crucified with Christ, yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me; and that life which I now live I live by faith in the Son of God" (the transcendent object of faith and worship); and (2) Eph. iv. 13, "'Till we all attain to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God; unto a perfect man, the measure of the

stature of the fulness of the Christ” in the completed Church.<sup>1</sup>

2. To come then to the second term: “His only Son.” The history of the phrase “Son of God,” as applied to our Lord, is of great interest. It began by being a synonym for “the Christ,” as is plain from its use by the demoniacs: “What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of God?” and by the High Priest, “Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” a use which bases itself on Psalm ii., where it is said of the King established on the holy hill of Zion, “Thou art My Son.” But our Lord seems to have avoided its use, just as He avoided the other Messianic title of “Son of David,” because of its associations. It had become worn like a coin rubbed by passing from hand to hand till it becomes, in fact, a mere counter. There is a curiously ironical conversation with the Jews recorded by St. John (x. 35), one of several instances of irony in the Gospel history, where our Lord argues that if the Scripture refers to judges as “gods” (Ps. lxxxii. 6) it cannot be blasphemy for the consecrated servant of God to be called merely “son” of God. The argument was ironical; it was to make them think what

<sup>1</sup> For the distinction implied in these passages see the Dean of Westminster’s note on Ephesians iv. 13.

they meant by the word "God" and the word "son." And the Apostles did meditate upon it. The teaching they received from their Master was full of references to "My Father in heaven." "Every one who shall confess Me before men, him will I confess before My Father which is in heaven." "All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father; no one knoweth the Father save the Son." And the conviction was thus gradually formed in their minds that He to whom God was the Father in the unique sense in which God was the Father of Jesus, must be in a unique sense His Son. The point intended to be brought out by the word "son" was the identity of nature as witnessed to by His words and His works. Jesus was the image of God; His disciples saw (in St. Paul's words) "the glory of God in the face of Jesus" (2 Cor. iv. 6); in St. John's words, His glory was "as of an only-begotten of a father." And this recognition of a community of being was still further emphasised by the Resurrection, as St. Paul lays down in Rom. i. 4, where he says that Jesus Christ was "determined" to be "Son of God" by the exhibition of Divine power in the Resurrection.

And then the further question arose, Was this unique Son son always, or only after His

human birth? There can be no doubt as to the opinion held by the first Christians. No one can forget the argument about God's love in Rom. viii., which describes Him as not sparing His own Son, but "sending Him in the likeness of sinful flesh"; or the argument about Christ's humility in Phil. ii., which describes how He who was in the form of God emptied Himself and was made in the likeness of men. And, apart from such special testimonies, the mere recognition of Christ as Divine carried with it also the recognition of His eternity. This of course is not to say that there was always manhood in the Godhead, but that there was always sonship, the potentiality of manhood. St. John, in the preface of his Gospel, traces the course of the gradual revelation of this sonship: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"; then, "All things were made through Him"; then, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men" (*i.e.* in the created world, including man, men could see a revelation of God). And then, finally, the Word became human flesh; the full image of Divine Sonship was manifested.

If the aspect of redemption which we emphasise under the acknowledgment that Jesus is the Christ be the hallowing of our nature by the



living in Christ and Christ in us, the aspect emphasised by this second acknowledgment that Jesus is the Son of God is one that directly follows from that—namely, that through this indwelling presence we too have received the adoption of sons, and look up to God as our Father: “As many as received Him, to them He gave the privilege to become children of God.” We are admitted through Him into the family of God, and enjoy that freedom which is the special attribute of sonship—“the liberty of the glory of the children of God.” “If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”

3. We pass to the concluding phrase of this confession, “our Lord,” which emphasises the truth that the Father is still known to us only through the Son, and that all authority has been committed unto Him. He is our Lord, the Vicegerent of the All-sovereign Ruler.

This acknowledgment is made emphatically by St. Peter in his speech at the first Pentecost, where, after quoting the 110th Psalm, “Jehovah said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool,” he continues, “Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made this Jesus, whom ye crucified, *Lord* as well as Christ.” The sense of St. Peter’s assertion, therefore, that “Jesus is



Lord” must be gathered from his quotation from Psalm cx.: “Jehovah said unto my king, Sit thou on My right hand.” He must mean that Jesus is “our King, at the right hand of God”—*i.e.* our Divine King. St. Paul expounds the same doctrine from the same Psalm in the great Resurrection chapter of 1 Corinthians. “He must reign till all His enemies are put under His feet”; *i.e.* He must reign as God’s vicegerent, until in the end “God shall be all in all.” And we get the same teaching in that familiar place of Phil. ii., “Wherefore also God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him the name which is above every name (*i.e.* the Divine name); that at Jesus’s (Divine) name every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” “Jesus is Lord.” That seems to St. Paul, in Dr. Hort’s words, “the fundamental and sufficient expression of Christian faith.”<sup>1</sup> “No man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit.”

No one can miss the significance of this acknowledgment in its bearing on our redemption. I will notice only two points. (1) If Jesus is our Lord, then His commandments must be the rule of our lives; there is nothing for it, for us

<sup>1</sup> Hort on 1 Pet. i. 3.

who accept His lordship, but "to bring every thought into captivity to His obedience" (2 Cor. x. 5). "Why call ye Me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" To such an appeal there can be no reply. (2) If Jesus is Lord—the one Lord through whom are all things—we must call upon Him for what we need. Dr. Hort, in the place I have already cited, notices how constantly this act of "calling upon the name of the Lord" is referred to as what especially marks and stamps a Christian. "The same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all that call upon Him" (Rom. x. 12); "Paul unto the church of God at Corinth, with all that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, in every place, their Lord and ours." Faith, then, in Jesus of Nazareth, as the Christ, and as the only Son of God, comes to expression, and so to reality, as we bow our knees to call upon One whom our hearts acknowledge to be in very truth our own Lord.

## IV

*Since then the children are partakers of flesh and blood,  
He also Himself in like manner took part of the same.*

HEB. ii. 14.

*He learned obedience through the things which He  
suffered.*—v. 8.

AFTER asserting our faith in Jesus of Nazareth, as the Christ, the Son of God, our Lord and Master, the Apostles' Creed passes to an historical section, which enumerates the great outstanding facts of our Lord's earthly life. One purpose of this section becomes plain if we compare the corresponding section of our Nicene Creed: "*Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary; and was made man,*" etc. It lays stress on the fact that the redemption which Christ effected was not effected simply by a word from heaven. Creation might be possible by a mere "Let be": "Let there be light, and there was light"; but not redemption; and for this reason, that man having been created in the image of God, and gifted with

the spiritual endowment of mind and will, could not be treated as a material thing to be swayed hither and thither by the fiat even of the Creator Himself.

. . . It is by no breath,

Turn of eye, wave of hand, that salvation joins issue with death.

“It cost more to redeem their souls.” Man had to be *won*, and so the Word became flesh. There is a sentence in one of the letters of St. Catherine of Siena which expresses this truth with force and point: “God has armed men with a weapon of such strength that neither devil nor creature can triumph over it, and this is the free-will of man; and by this liberty God says, ‘I created thee without thee, but I cannot save thee without thee.’”

This winning of mankind back to God implied the Incarnation, because only by learning obedience to the Divine will, *in a human life*, could the power be gained to convey that spirit of obedience to the world. The Creed therefore lays stress on the fact that the life of Jesus Christ was indeed a human life of obedience; the life of one who was very man. To understand why it was necessary that any clauses should be put into the Creed in vindication of our Lord's real *humanity*, it must be borne in mind that Christian converts

from the schools of philosophy found it difficult to believe that it could have been necessary, even if it was possible, that the Son of God should either really become man or really suffer. They invented various theories to explain the facts away, as that the Christ only for a time occupied the body of Jesus, and withdrew before the Passion; while others, who considered that all matter was evil, would not allow that even the body of Jesus was real, but held it to have been a phantom. It was necessary in face of such Docetic doctrine (as it was called) to assert the Church's belief that Jesus Christ was truly man, that He was truly born, truly suffered, truly died, truly rose from the dead.

X The real humanity of Jesus Christ is to-day accepted without dispute; the only question still under discussion (so far as I know) being how far His human limitations extended in the matter of knowledge. Nevertheless these historical clauses have still a very real use; for they insist that the Christ in whom we profess our belief is none other than the Christ of history; they direct us past all abstract definitions to the living and breathing figure that moves through the pages of the Gospels: and they protest against our worshipping any



other Christ of our imagination—whether the Christ we worship be the product of our theological or of our philosophical prepossessions. There is no actual reference to the Scriptures in the Apostles' Creed as there is in the Nicene, but the recitation of these clauses—"Who was conceived" etc.—is virtually an appeal to the Gospels; and the Church of England in her Articles draws this implication out into the plain statement that "the Creeds may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture," and that "nothing is to be taught as necessary to salvation but what may be so proved."

Now a distinction has been recently drawn by a celebrated Roman Catholic divine between the Christ of history and the Christ of faith, the Christ of the Gospels and the Christ of the Creeds. The Abbé Loisy drew the distinction in the interest of members of his own communion whose minds were disturbed by modern criticism; but it has gained a certain measure of support among ourselves. The investigation of the origin of our beliefs, contained in records nearly two thousand years old, the verification of occurrences so far removed from us, is a difficult and may seem an uncertain process. Accordingly, those who make this distinction say to us,



“There is really no reason to be disturbed. The question of origins need concern only the historian ; for in the evolution of Christianity, as in every other evolution, it is not the origins that are of consequence, but their issue. It is a mistake therefore to regard as of fundamental importance the so-called historical documents of the New Testament ; indeed, to regard them as in purpose historical is to misunderstand them ; they are really the form in which the faith of a particular age found expression for itself. The Christ of the Gospels is but one particular shape taken by the Christ of faith ; and in every age what is of consequence is the faith, not the mode in which its object is conceived ; much less the historical substratum underlying the mode, with which criticism occupies itself.<sup>1</sup> Now there is in this view an obvious element of truth which it is well to distinguish from what, I feel sure, most English Churchmen must consider its essential fallaciousness. The element of truth seems to be that it recognises the value of the experience of the Christian Church. It points to the fact—which is itself an historical fact—that the Church has for all these many centuries believed in Jesus Christ, and that this belief has

<sup>1</sup> This is a rough but not, I think, an unfair representation of the view taken in *L'évangile et l'église*.

resulted in the broad lines of Christian character. Accordingly Christians would all agree that it would be idle for historical criticism to attempt (if it did attempt) to tell them that Christ is not what the faith of the Church all through the centuries has asserted (may we not say, has proved) that He is : the object of their love and worship, the hearer of prayer, the strength of all who put their trust in Him.

But then this faith in Jesus as the Son of God may be accompanied, as it is (we should say) in the Roman Church, with beliefs, recommended to us by the authority of that Church as essential verities, which, though they are said to be legitimate developments of the "faith once delivered to the saints," do not commend themselves to us ; and so, unless we are to be at the mercy of popular superstition, we must have some standard by which to test them. And that standard must be the faith of the apostolic age, as it is recorded for us in Scripture. Accordingly we attach great weight to this part of our Creed which refers us to the New Testament for the truth about Jesus Christ ; being sure that unless we can feel drawn to love and trust and worship the gracious and loving figure there presented to us, what we worship in the chamber of our imagery is not Christ. The Christ of )

faith is the Christ of history ; or He is a chimera.

The question, then, recurs as to historical criticism. The Abbé Loisy and his school wish to secure us from the troubles and dangers of investigation (which are the peculiar trials of faith in this age), by calling us to separate the faith from history ; and we must reject the helping hand. Are we left, then, entirely to the mercies of criticism ? I have already said that the main points of faith stand secure from attack because they are corroborated from generation to generation in the experience of the Church. But I do not see how it can be denied that the recorded details of the history of our Lord must be as subject to criticism as those of any other history. As a matter of fact, we all recognise this in practice : we use the ordinary means of harmonising conflicting narratives ; of choosing between various versions of the same event, and so forth ; we mark the peculiarities of the different historians, and see reasons for preferring the arrangement of this one in this case and that one in that ; we discriminate the various sources upon which the writers have drawn. Only we claim that historical criticism shall come to us without prepossessions ; when by historical criticism is meant a rejection of

what seems miraculous, apart from any questions of text or evidences, we demur, because such a rejection, being based on the supposed necessity of co-ordinating the Gospel narratives with ordinary experience, ceases to be critical.

We do not then repudiate criticism as an unholy thing. The constitutional position of the Church of England, as a protest against unscriptural developments of dogma, forbids it to do that. And most unambiguously, in a recent sermon before the University of Oxford, the Bishop of Birmingham has expressed what most educated members of the Church of England will accept as the right and wise position to take up in this matter :

It is very difficult to conceive any critical scholar supposing, that if the New Testament narratives are not sufficient to warrant us in believing that Jesus Christ was really born of a Virgin, and really fed the five thousand with the five loaves, and was really raised from the dead the third day, there is any other witness which can support the statements, considered as records of actual events. We cannot refuse to enter the region of free criticism with our Gospels ; nor can we pretend that the

validity of our Creeds is independent of the issue of such criticism. If the Creeds stand, with their historical and doctrinal statements, it is because the Gospels stand.<sup>1</sup>

We pass, then, to speak shortly in detail about the several historical facts on which the Apostles' Creed lays emphasis.

*Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.* Or as it is in the earlier form, “Born from the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary.” Some critics think that there is evidence that an earlier form still was simply “born of the Virgin Mary,” the main purpose of the clause being (at the time the Creed was composed) to attest our Lord's real humanity; and that later, when controversy centred round His divinity, the phrase “by the Holy Ghost” was added to emphasise that side of the truth. It may be so. For that was the order in which heresy attacked the faith: first the humanity was denied and then the divinity. The earliest reference to the doctrine of virgin birth outside the Gospels is in two letters of the martyred Bishop Ignatius, who suffered in the year 110. In one he says: “Ye believe that Christ was truly born of a Virgin, truly baptized, and truly

<sup>1</sup> *The Permanent Creed* (Murray), p. 14.



crucified"; in a famous sentence of the other, he speaks of "three mysteries to be proclaimed aloud, which were wrought in the silence of God: the virginity of Mary, and her child-bearing, and the Lord's death." The interesting point, in regard to this reference, is that Ignatius was concerned to establish against the heretics our Lord's *humanity*, not His divinity, so that the reference to the virginity of Mary represents a tradition, which was not to his immediate purpose in argument. It is however on the (prefaces to the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke that the belief for us rests, and the question has been much canvassed lately whether the authority of these two prefaces is sufficient, in the silence of St. Mark and St. John, and also (probably) of St. Paul, to warrant the belief. The attitude of the Church at present in face of this criticism I should describe partly as a conviction that the evidence is really good and sufficient, and partly as an attitude of reserve due to the instinct of self-preservation. The theologians who think the evidence for the miracle insufficient tell us that we lose nothing by surrendering the belief. That is not quite so. Granted that no doctrine is expressly based on the fact of the miraculous birth in Scripture or in Ignatius, yet we lose something (surely



we lose much) by deserting the faith of Christendom. In what other point have we deserted it? Why should we not be anxious not to desert it here? The Church is greater than we are. And although it is quite true that no doctrine is built upon the fact in Scripture, or in the very earliest sub-apostolic writings, it does not follow that doctrine is not involved. We should not be surprised, I think, if theologians who rejected the virgin birth of our Lord rejected also the doctrine of His sinlessness, or the doctrine (not of His *true*, but) of his complete and representative manhood. It is that consideration perhaps more than any other which makes us hesitate to say that no doctrine is involved in the assertion or rejection of the virgin birth.

I say this to account for the instinct of antagonism which many of us are conscious of when this question is raised. At the same time, we must admit that in the last resort the question can only be decided on the evidence, and not by our prepossessions. It is a question for scholarship, not for popular voting; and we may be content to leave it to the Church doctors to determine. Always when miracles are in question we justify our belief in them by two considerations: (1) their congruity with

our ideas of God; (2) the sufficient evidence that attests them. We accept the miracles of our Lord both because they attest the spirit of the God of love, and because they are so woven into the narrative that it would be incomprehensible without them. *This* miracle, like all others, must submit itself to the same two tests. I will only say one thing more on the subject. We are bound to remember that by our general appeal to the Bible as the warrant for our Creed, we of the English Church are precluded from taunting with infidelity those scholars who while holding fast their faith in the Incarnate Lord appeal to the Bible from the Creed on the question of the *mode* of the Incarnation. The two things, the Incarnation and its mode, though they may not have been separated in the Church since the days of St. Paul, are distinguishable.

*Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried.* The words *suffered* and *dead* are later additions to the Creed, added perhaps for the sake of emphasis and completeness. They bring out vividly what the Creed when first composed aimed especially at emphasising, the reality of our Lord's manhood. The reference to Pontius Pilate is intended to lay stress on the historical truth of the events

enumerated. We may be grateful for the insertion of the word *suffered* as we have it in our Nicene Creed (and it may have been introduced under its influence), because in the fullest manner it sums up the aspect of our Lord's life which we are most bound to keep in mind—the side of His life which was due to human sin, and which was the pledge of our redemption. *Not to have suffered* would have meant not to have borne the load of human guilt. It was a speculation of Athanasius that our Lord would have been incarnate to fulfil our humanity, even if man had never sinned; but because man sinned that life was necessarily a life of suffering.

I pass to speak of certain clauses in the Creed which, though they express realities of our faith, are clothed in language which is not the language of our modern thought, and so require a certain measure of translation.

*He descended into hell.* This clause is not found in the earliest (Roman) form of the Creed, and first occurs in the Creed of Aquileia, which was borrowed from Rome with two or three additions. It was probably added to render the article on the passion more complete by bridging the interval between the death and resurrection. For the clause means that our

Lord descended into the under-world, *i.e.* the abode of the dead. The Jews considered the place of the dead to be under the earth, as the Psalms sufficiently testify (*e.g.* lxiii. 9), so that the modern rendering of the clause would be, "He was with the spirits of the dead."

Naturally speculation was early rife as to what our Lord did during that interval. He descended, some thought, to instruct the patriarchs, others to release them from the power of Satan. The "harrowing of hell," in this sense, was a favourite subject for medieval representation. But it is sufficient for us to follow St. Paul in this matter, who says that Christ descended to the lowest depths "to fill all things," *i.e.* to fulfil all human conditions. He died and He became a bodiless spirit, because we die and are separated from the body. He would share our lot.

*He ascended into heaven.*—If we interpret the *descent* into hell without laying stress on its spatial phraseology, so we must interpret also the *ascent* into heaven. To those who framed the Creed, just as the home of the dead was an under-world, so the home of God was an over-world. The telescope, as we have been told, has searched the sky without finding any God there, but that is not disconcerting to any one



who understands that God does not occupy space. The ascent into heaven, then, means the return to God; and what that means *for us* we can see by comparing the entirely local presence of Christ with His disciples in Galilee for a short period of time with the presence of Christ with all His disciples always. The promise, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world,” could be given only as a consequence of the ascension to God. Viewed as a removal in space it may seem impossible to harmonise “I go to the Father” with “I will not leave you orphaned”; but understood as the entering upon the completeness of spiritual being, we can see that only “the going away” from the disciples could have made possible the unlimited presence with them.

And so, similarly, we must interpret the *sitting at the right hand of the Father*. The language of this clause of the Creed is based upon the 110th Psalm, and the idea is that of Divine sovereignty. In assenting to this clause, we profess our belief in that verse of the gospel: “All authority is given unto Me in heaven and in earth”; it is the warrant for our confession that “Jesus is Lord.”<sup>1</sup>

But then, if Christ’s ascension to the inner-

<sup>1</sup> See page 48.



most presence of God is the pledge of His presence with us always—how can we speak as we do, in the next clause, of His *coming* to judge. To interpret it aright we must recall the Christian teaching we were considering last time, that Jesus is both Christ and Lord; He is Christ in the Church, and Lord above the Church; Christ to prompt and encourage and purify our efforts to obey, but Lord also to prescribe our work, and if so, Lord also to judge it. The acknowledgment that Jesus is Lord of the world carries with it the acknowledgment that He has set an end before it, and that the world must be judged by Him, as it has accomplished that end or fallen short of it; if He has prescribed to each age its work, each age must be judged as to its performance of that work; and so it must be with each nation and each individual. “The coming to judge” therefore follows upon the “sitting at the right hand of God” quite logically; for He who is Lord must also be Judge.

The Gospel stories illustrate the national interpretation of this article of the Creed by the stress they lay on the destruction of Jerusalem: that visitation was, they say, a coming of Christ in judgment, and the judgment was for condemnation. Jerusalem had failed in the

work allotted it to do. We cannot look abroad in the world now without having it borne in still upon us that Christian nations are still judged as nations ; judged and condemned and punished ; judged by the Christ whom they worship, and punished by those who call not on His name.

Again, we believe that Churches also are judged ; and if they fulfil not their purpose, the purpose is fulfilled by other means, and they are condemned.

We believe also that each of us is judged as he accepts or rejects the prompting of the Christ within.

We may be grateful that the Apostles' Creed does not assign this judgment of Christ solely to the end of the world—and so limit our belief in it, as a daily fact going on all around us. But, of course, beyond all these judgments in the past and in the present there must be a last judgment at the end ; a last for each man, and for each society, and for the world ; in which each must give an account of his works in the light of the full knowledge of the revealed Christ. This clause about the judgment is said to have been especially aimed at the teaching that the God who sent the Redeemer, being the God of love, could judge nobody—a feeble Christianity.

The true consolation in view of the judgment is given in the words of our Judge Himself, “The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son, *because He is Son of man*”;<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* because He has perfect knowledge of human nature and perfect sympathy with it.

<sup>1</sup> John v. 27.

## V

*Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of ministrations, and the same Lord. And there are diversities of workings, but the same God, who worketh all things in all.—1 COR. xii. 4-6.*

WE pass to-day to the third section of our Creed, which speaks of belief in the Holy Spirit; and I propose to devote this lecture to considering how Scripture teaches us to think of the Holy Spirit, in whom we believe.

One reason for retaining the *Quicunque vult* in our prayer-books, if not in our services, is that it supplies a much-needed protest against the idea that when we profess a belief in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, we are professing a belief in three independent spiritual beings. We are careful indeed, in the *Litany*, to say that we recognise three Persons and *one* God; but in our ordinary language a "person" means a separate person, an individual; whereas, when we assert personality of Father, Son, and Spirit, we do not intend to assert this separate and independent personality. We mean

to say that God has revealed Himself to us as Father, as Son, and as Holy Spirit, and that these relations exist within the Godhead ; but, as instructed Christians, we mean to say also that the Father has revealed Himself in the Son, and through the Son in the Spirit. That is the Christian faith. We acknowledge God the Father as the sole source of being ; we acknowledge in Jesus Christ the Son of God, who was incarnate, and lived and died and rose again for our redemption ; and from that we go on to acknowledge that the Holy Spirit has been sent through Christ into our hearts to bring each one of us within that redemption, to “sanctify us,” as the Catechism says ; but while we mark these distinctions, we recognise at the same time that “God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself,”<sup>1</sup> and also that “Christ is in us”<sup>2</sup> through the Spirit which He sends. In the science of theology, as in every science, it is important to make right distinctions, and not to make wrong distinctions ; and as the attempt is sometimes made to distinguish the presence of Christ in us from the presence of the Spirit in us, assigning specific functions to one and the other, it will be best to examine before we go further whether this distinction can be maintained.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. v. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Col. i. 27.



In speaking of Jesus as the Christ, in a previous lecture, we saw that by “Christ” was meant the “anointed” or consecrated servant of God for the work of redemption. But what was the “anointing” or “consecration”? It was anointing by the Spirit of God. Our Lord makes this clear in the application to Himself of the prophecy in Isaiah lxi., which He read in the synagogue at Nazareth: “*The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor,*” adding, “To-day hath this Scripture been fulfilled in your ears.” And St. Peter, when in the house of Cornelius he was summing up the story of that wonderful life, put it thus: “God *anointed* Jesus of Nazareth *with the Holy Ghost* and with power, who went about doing good”; and while the Apostle was speaking the Holy Ghost fell on all that heard; a fact that vividly suggests to us what must be the real meaning of the Christ’s redemption, that it was a mediating to men the Holy Spirit with which He Himself had been consecrated, according to the prophecy of John Baptist: “He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire”; for St. Peter at once exclaims: “Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?” But in how many other places

is not this chief good of Christianity expressed as the presence of *Christ* in the Christian? "Henceforth," says St. Paul, "it is not I that live, but *Christ* liveth in me"; and he writes to the Corinthians: "Know ye not as to your own selves, that *Jesus Christ is in you*? unless indeed ye be reprobate" (2 Cor. xiii. 5).

If each of these presences is the great gift of God to us, by which we become Christian, we cannot draw a distinction between the presence of Christ in us, and the presence of the Holy Spirit in us. In two remarkable passages St. Paul expressly refuses to distinguish them. "Now, the Lord," he says "*is the Spirit*"<sup>1</sup>—the Spirit of God; and again, he says, the second Adam "became a life-giving Spirit."<sup>2</sup> And for the identification of the Christ and the Spirit in us we have the warrant of our Lord Himself, as recorded in the Fourth Gospel; where after telling the disciples about the Holy Spirit whom the Father would send in His name, He goes on to say, "Let not your heart be troubled, *I* go away, and *I* come again to you" (xiv. 27, 28). We must look with suspicion, therefore, on any rough-and-ready theology which pretends to distinguish in us the presence of Christ from the presence of the Spirit—assigning perhaps

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 17

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 45.

the one to baptism, and the other to confirmation. What Christ's teaching was we may see by comparing two other verses of this chapter in St. John, which are built on the same model. The one is: "If a man love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him"; and the other is: "If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments, and I will pray the Father, and He will give you the Spirit of truth that He may abide with you for ever"; passages which, when taken together, make plain that the Father and Son come to us *in* the Spirit of truth.

If more evidence is required, we may turn to the familiar argument in the 8th chapter of Romans: "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the *Spirit of God* dwelleth in you. But if any man hath not *the Spirit of Christ*, he is none of His. And if *Christ* is in you, the body is dead, but the spirit is life." The Spirit of God in you, the Spirit of Christ in you, Christ in you—the argument requires them to be equivalent.

At the same time, though Christ brings the Father to us in the Spirit—yet we do not merely identify the Spirit with the Son, any more than we confuse the Son with the Father.

They are inseparable indeed, but not identical. In the words of our Nicene Creed: "the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son."

Consider what this must mean in regard to the great process of man's creation and redemption. And think first what must be intended by that great name, the *Son*, or *Word*, of God. If God be Reason, and Will, and Love—these great Divine powers must express themselves, and express themselves perfectly; and the Son, or Word, of God must be the perfect expression—"the express image"<sup>1</sup>—of God's reason and will and love; and therefore, in regard to a creation under conditions of time, the Son or Word (being the perfect expression of God's loving will) must be both the beginning and end—the "alpha and omega"—the source and goal of creation; that through whom all things were made, and also that into which, one day, they will be summed up. For we cannot conceive God as willing a creation that shall not be, when complete, a true and perfect expression of His Divine nature; and that is the Word.

But then, further, creation is a process sustained and carried forward through every phase of its development by the immanent power of

<sup>1</sup> Heb. i. 3.

God; and this fact leads us to recognise *the agent* of creation in the Holy Spirit: *i.e.* in God revealed as energy passing forth, and realising those reasonable designs of love, of which the Father is the originator, and the Son the full expression.

The Bible gives us a history of the creative work of the Holy Spirit, "the life-giver," in two chapters, separated by the great event in which the Creation reaches its height—the Incarnation of the Eternal Son. Previous to that the Spirit's work, after the physical structure of the race was perfected, was one of progressive imparting of spiritual gifts, and repairing of the waste caused by sin, in preparation for the coming of the Son; subsequent to that it has been the task of making actual in human lives the new sonship brought to men by the Son of Man.

The former of the two chapters of revelation, that which is contained in the Old Testament, opens with the impressive picture of the Spirit of God brooding on the face of chaos; and thenceforward we find attributed to Him, in a rising scale, the various creative gifts. First (1) the gift of life; as when it is said: "Thou sendest forth Thy *Spirit*, and they are *created*." Then (2) the gifts of mind; Joseph



and Joshua are described as men "in whom is the Spirit of God"; the seventy elders appointed to assist Moses are endowed with a portion of the "Spirit" that was on him; and the architect of the wilderness sanctuary is said to have been filled with the Spirit of God "in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship" (Exod. xxxi. 3). Then (3) we rise to the gift by which a man was enabled to interpret the Divine will; a gift which passed from what was at first perhaps not distinguishable from divination into the religious inspiration which we recognise in the great prophets like Amos and Hosea and Isaiah. Finally (4) there is the gift of holiness; as we have it expressed, for example, in Psalm li., where X "Take not *Thy Holy Spirit* from me" is to be interpreted by the previous verse: "Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me." In all these ways, the Holy Spirit moulded human nature; making itself felt by men as the energy of the living God; that God who besets men behind and before, and is nigh unto all that call upon Him. We notice as we read the Old Testament chronologically two changes in the work assigned to the Spirit: first, that it deepens down in man's nature from mental into religious life—and at the

same time from being the special endowment of a great prophet or king here and there, it becomes the possession, in a measure, of all the elect people ; but in *full* measure even at the close of the Old Testament it still remains a hope—the Christ that was to come was to be one to whom should be given the *full* unction of the Spirit, the “ Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, and the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of God.”

Gradually, then, from the first dawn of creation, the Spirit was working out the will of God in the world as that will was eternally expressed in the Eternal Son ; a creative purpose that cannot be described more adequately than in the simple words of Genesis : “ Let us make man in our image ” ; and in the fulness of time that purpose was fulfilled in the Incarnation of the Son, by which great action man was at last made in the image of God ; and then there remained for the Spirit the task of anointing in the same fulness the whole of humanity, summing it all up within the anointed Christ, in the Holy Church which is His body ; and that is the ministry still going on, of which the New Testament furnishes us with the first evidence and the first philosophy.

The statement in St. John vii. 39, “ The Holy Ghost *was not yet* given, because that Jesus was

not yet glorified," must not be understood as contradicting the language of the Old Testament about the operation of the Holy Spirit in the prophets. Our Lord recognised in His conversation with Nicodemus that "a master of Israel" should understand from the Scriptures that there was such a thing as being "born of the Spirit." What is meant is that until our Lord had won His final victory for man (and it is that victory which St. John speaks of as His glory), the revelation of *God* in the Son and the perfecting of *man* in the Son were alike incomplete, and so the Spirit could not impart that glorified manhood and sonship to the Church. There is a sense in which it is true to say that from the very first the Spirit was revealing in the world the things of Christ—the spiritual rock was Christ<sup>1</sup>—for all the Spirit's revelations were parts of the one great whole of the truth of God, which Christ is; but the whole truth, "as it is in Jesus," could not be conveyed to men till it had been revealed.

The simplest and at the same time the most complete statement of the Holy Spirit's work of sanctification is given by St. Paul in the well-known verse: "God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Father" (Gal. iv. 6). We received, he says, the Spirit of *adoption*; and

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. x. 4.

this adoption, being the work of the Spirit, is not a legal fiction, but an actual process of the creation of sons after the image of the original Son—a creation of brethren to Him by a renewing of men's minds, a veritable transformation of character ; so that in lieu of a certain type of actions, which St. Paul calls fruits of the flesh, another type of actions spring up, viz. fruits of the Spirit. This work of regeneration has two sides. It is a gradual destruction of the fleshly mind : “they that are *Christ's* have crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts.” And also it is an invigoration of the spiritual mind, that side of our humanity on which we can hold communion with God. “The Spirit helpeth our infirmity.” He is, as St. John testifies, a Paraclete or advocate, a comforter and strengthener, what Milton calls “a strong-siding champion.” He strengthens the whole of our manhood, intelligence, will, and affections. As strengthening the intelligence, He is the Spirit of Truth, who “takes of the things of Christ and shows them to us” ; because “the things of God no man knoweth but the Spirit of God.” Not that He helps every one in the same way, for all have not the same natural bent ; His gifts are infinite as the mind of God, and He distributes them as He will. As strengthening the will He

is the Spirit of Power, who stablishes, strengthens, settles. St. Paul prays for the Ephesian converts that God would grant them to be *strengthened with power by His Spirit* in the inner man. Finally, as strengthening the affections, He is the Spirit of Love. This is indeed His fundamental characteristic, for, as St. John tells us, "God is love," and he that dwelleth in God necessarily dwells in love ; in love first of all to God, as being (by adoption) his Father ; and then, to all the brethren.

It is clear, then, that to be able to say, "I believe in the Holy Ghost" is a very necessary part of Christian faith, and a part that intimately concerns our daily life. In one sense the belief is less easy to us than it was to the first Christians, because with them the presence of the Holy Spirit made itself irresistibly felt by outward signs. "Speaking with tongues," and "prophesying" are no longer part of our regular experience in worship ; nor can we, like St. Paul, point to the "power of signs and wonders" in our midst as evidence of the presence of Christ's Spirit in the Church. But if we have less evidence of this outward character—a real necessity for which we can see in those first days when the more inward fruits of the Spirit were only in their bud—we have witness enough in



the lives of the faithful to a power which we cannot but trace to God through Christ. Many of us may feel that we could dispense with the old outward symbols of the Spirit's presence if only we had the old inward conviction; if we could say, as St. Paul said, evidently narrating what he was conscious of in his own nature: "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God. . . . The Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings that no words can express." But is it so certain that we have no such experience? May it not be merely that we give the experience another explanation? The monitions of conscience are a very real witness, in the lives of most of us, to a will that is higher than our own. And does nothing ever come to us in moments of thought but what we can claim as *of* ourselves, as well as *in* ourselves? Undoubtedly we have all of us the power to live so completely on the surface of our souls as to be deaf to any voice that might call to us from its depths. But also we all know ways, if we would but use them, of stilling the din of the world and our own heart, so that we may at least listen for the voice of the Spirit. With some, great music has this power, as it had with the old prophets; with some, great verse; with

some, the beauty or majesty of the world, night with its stars, or the voices of the sea ; and for all there is one way open—the way of prayer : the surrender of a man's will wholly to the will of God, which, as it cannot be done except in the Spirit of Christ, so it never fails to bring with it the peace of God, which is, after all, the only assurance any man need wish for that his prayer is made in the Holy Spirit.

## VI

*So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the head corner stone.*—EPH. ii. 19.

AFTER declaring our belief in God the Holy Spirit, the Apostles' Creed passes on to acknowledge certain great facts which follow from that belief. Our form of the Creed marks no distinction between the two senses of the words "believe in," though a difference of course there is. We do not *believe in* the forgiveness of sins in the same sense as we *believe in* God. When we say "I believe in God," we mean (in the phrases of the Catechism) "I put my whole trust in Him, I call upon Him, I honour His holy name and His word, and [endeavour to] serve Him truly." When we say "I believe in the forgiveness of sins," we mean "I believe that there is forgiveness." The transition is made easier for us by the clause that comes between these two, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church," which although it really

means, "I believe that there is a Holy Church," might also mean that "the Church has my trust as being the home of the Holy Spirit."

Those who read Latin will understand how the uncertainty arises. The Latin text runs, "Credo in Sanctum Spiritum, sanctam ecclesiam," and it is only by comparison with such a form as that of the Bangor Antiphony, which reads, "Sanctam *esse* ecclesiam," or a form like that of Aquileia, which reads, "Credo in Sancto Spiritu, sanctam ecclesiam," that it becomes evident that the meaning is, "I believe in the Holy Spirit, and believe that there is a holy church."<sup>1</sup>

1. We believe, then, that there is a Church, a society founded by Christ Himself, consisting of all those who believe in God through Him, and held together in unity by the Holy Spirit. The history of the Church's foundation, with its charter, is given in the Gospels in the description of what took place at Cæsarea Philippi. The foundation stone of this building—or, to keep our Lord's own image, the rock on which

<sup>1</sup> It should be mentioned that the form "Credis *in* remissionem peccatorum et vitam æternam per sanctam ecclesiam" is found in St. Cyprian, and that the Greek form quoted from St. Cyril of Jerusalem has throughout πιστεύομεν εἰς (Burn, *Introduction to the Creeds*, p. 67). Our Nicene Creed avoids the ambiguity by changing the verb: "I *acknowledge* one baptism," "I *look for* the resurrection of the dead."

it was built—was St. Peter, the first confessor; and confession of Jesus as Lord has been ever since the act of the Holy Spirit in us which has added each "living stone" to the ever-growing edifice. In saying our Creed, in standing forth as confessors, we are realising ourselves as members of the Church, for the Church is the company of the *faithful*.

In addition to this image of the Church as a single building growing steadily, stone by stone, we have another image given us by Christ—the image of a vine and its branches; and this, though it is less expressive as to the growth of the Church by the incorporation of individuals, is more expressive as to the bond of unity, which is the circulation through all branches of one life, namely, the Holy Spirit of Christ.

And there is one other necessary characteristic of the Church which these metaphors do not convey, and which cannot be conveyed under any such single image, namely, that it is a community bound together not only by a common faith in God through Christ, but by mutual love among the brethren. The peculiar law of the society is the law of love; and St. Luke notes the sense of fellowship—as one of the prominent marks of the society—



at its first establishment: "All who believed together had all things common"; "the multitude of the believers was of one heart and soul, and not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own."<sup>1</sup>

To this Divine society, established on earth by Christ through the Apostles, we give in this Creed two epithets: it is *Holy* and it is *Catholic*.

(i) In what sense do we speak of the Church as *holy*? The word as applied to the ancient Jewish Church, from which it was inherited by the Christian Church, meant "set apart for God's service," "consecrated to Him." It implied the *election* of the nation by God for His purposes, as it is said in Deuteronomy, "Thou art an *holy* people unto the Lord: the Lord thy God hath *chosen* thee to be a peculiar people unto Himself." These covenant privileges the Apostles regarded as being carried on to the Christian Church, and accordingly St. Paul speaks habitually of the members of the Christian society as "holy," the word which our version renders *saints*; and St. Peter similarly quotes and applies to the Church the

<sup>1</sup> For an admirable exposition of this article of the Creed, see a paper by Dean Church (*Oxford House Papers*); and for the importance of Church membership, see an article by Dr. Gore on "The Social Aspect of the Sacraments" (*Pilot*, i. 1).

declaration “ Ye are an *elect* race, a royal priesthood, an *holy* nation ”—*holy* because *elect*.

But both St. Peter and St. Paul invariably explain that this holiness in the sense of consecration implies a demand for holiness in the sense of purity of life. “ Ye are the temple of God,” says St. Paul, “ for the Spirit of God dwelleth in you: if any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy.” And so St. Peter, “ As He which called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of life.” Your holiness must not be merely “ separation for God’s service ” (as we may speak of the “ Holy Table ”), it must be conformity to God’s nature. It must be holiness in the sense in which God can be spoken of as “ holy,” *i.e.* *perfect, sinless*. “ Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect.” The condition of this freedom from sin is abiding in Christ and His Spirit, and this is possible in the Church, and not only possible but (we believe) a growing reality which will one day be actual fact of experience.

(ii) In the second place the Church is *Catholic*. The word is not found in the Apostles’ Creed until the fourth century; but it is found as an epithet of the Church as early as the epistles of Ignatius (martyred in 110), and the sentence in which it occurs is interesting as furnishing the

key to its original meaning: "Wherever the bishop appears, there should the laity be; just as wherever Christ Jesus is, there is the Catholic Church" (*Smyrn.* 8). Ignatius is illustrating the dependence of each individual church upon its official head and centre of unity, by comparing it with the dependence of the *general* Church—the whole body of the faithful dispersed throughout the world—upon the Lord Jesus. Catholic or general, then, is a necessary epithet of the Church, because of the existence of individual Christian societies; it points to the existence of a whole society; but not only that, it also lays stress on the truth that in Christ Jesus all human divisions of place and time and race and nationality are transcended, so that the Church has a message for the whole world in all ages. The Church, just because it carries the Spirit of Christ (the Word), must be universal. Why then, it may be asked, should this epithet, of all epithets, be chosen by certain bodies of Christians to the exclusion of others? Roman Christians, for example, speak of themselves as Catholics to the exclusion of the Church of England; and one party in the Church of England has adopted the title to the exclusion of other parties. The reason is an historical reason. As soon as heresy arose in the Church, it became necessary to

distinguish the bodies which retained the old truth from any which adopted the new error ; and as, at first at any rate, the error was restricted to a single teacher and his school, it was natural to oppose to his single teaching the teaching of the whole body of Christians, the faith of the universal or *Catholic* Church, which thus became distinguished as the universal or *Catholic* faith. Thus the word “Catholic,” meaning *universal*, came to mean *orthodox* or *true*, as opposed to heretical and schismatic ; and so a man was reckoned a member of the Catholic Church who held to the Catholic faith, instead of, as at first, finding the Catholic faith in the Catholic Church. “While you are abroad in foreign cities,” says St. Cyril of Jerusalem (c. 350), “do not inquire simply for *the Church*, for the heretical sects venture to call their dens by that name—ask for the *Catholic Church*.”<sup>1</sup> So, to put an extreme case, if under the Arian emperors the majority of local churches had embraced the Arian heresy, we can see that the word “Catholic” would have lost its original meaning altogether. But of course that was really not possible ; because heresy is by its essence *not universal* ; it is partial : it appeals only to certain persons on certain sides of their nature ;

<sup>1</sup> Swete, *The Apostles' Creed*, p. 79.

and so, while we have always to guard, in any particular period, against deciding upon what is true by any mere counting of votes, in the long run it is the truth that establishes itself, because it fits all the facts, while what is not completely true can account for only some of them; and so we may believe that ultimately the two senses of "Catholic" will again coincide—and the whole Church be orthodox; and even now we must believe that what all Christians hold in common is Catholic truth. *Securus judicat orbis terrarum.*<sup>1</sup>

One thing more. While it is true that heresy, by its very nature, is the teaching of individuals, and by its very nature can never become universal, we have to remember that truth also has always come into the world through individual prophets, and has had to win its way to acceptance. Christianity itself so came. And it may easily be that some fresh side of the truth at its first manifestation may be opposed as heresy by those who are yet the friends of the truth. But if we believe that there is a Catholic Church, it is because we believe that the Church is the home of the Holy Spirit, whose perpetual function it is to guide us into truth. And so

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of the Canon's "quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus," see the Bishop of Exeter's Charge (S.P.C.K.)



we have perfect confidence that what is not of God will come to naught, but that what is of God cannot be overthrown.

2. We pass now to the *Communion of Saints*. This is an early fifth-century addition; and scholars differ as to what its original sense was, for we find the original phrase *communio sanctorum* in use at the time in two senses. The Latin word *sanctorum* may be masculine or neuter, and according to the gender the phrase may mean “a fellowship in the sacraments” or a “fellowship with the saints,” especially the saints in heaven. Either would give a good sense in this place, for we advance naturally from a consideration of the Church to a consideration of the sacred rites of fellowship within the Church; or, with equal naturalness, from the thought of the Church on earth to the thought of its fellowship with the saints departed. Our translation may be held to have fixed for us the interpretation in the latter sense. We believe, then, that God has “knit together His elect in one communion and fellowship in the mystical body of His Son Christ our Lord,” and that this fellowship extends to the faithful departed. Of the general fellowship among believers I need say little. It is a truth which, while we all acknowledge it in word, needs to be made much

more actual in the lives of all of us. Church membership—fellowship in the household of God—how many mutual duties and responsibilities are implied in that! The ideal for Christians is to have things “in common.” As Mr. Lowell so well said :

The Holy Supper is kept indeed  
In whatso we share with another's need ;  
Not what we *give*, but what we *share*.

The fellowship with the faithful departed is a fact which the Reformed Church of England, while always recognising it, has hesitated to lay emphasis upon in its public services, because of the immense practical abuses that had grown up around it in mediæval times. The practices against which our Twenty-second Article was directed had been allowed to spring up in response to the very human desire to follow our brethren and companions into the world behind the veil, and to follow them efficaciously with our prayers ; but when appeal came to be made to Scripture, and no warrant could be found for what had become a great, perhaps the greater, part of men's common religion, this religion had to be cut away, though it cut away their very heartstrings. In time, perhaps, the Church of England may feel it right to admit once more into its Burial Service some thought and some

prayer for the departed, instead of the one poor parenthesis in which alone the departed is mentioned among the many prayers and hopes for ourselves ; but meanwhile the fellowship of each Christian with his own blessed dead is not forbidden him—fellowship of love and aspiration, and common trust and hope, and “remembrance before God.” And we may well believe that no human fellowship is so fraught with blessing for those who will entertain it without attempting by forbidden paths to pry into the secrets of that other world—attempts which end only in deceiving and degrading us. Our great poet has warned us that it is only at our best that we can hope for such fellowship.

How pure at heart and sound in head,  
 With what divine affections bold  
 Should be the man whose thought would hold  
 An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call  
 The spirits from their golden day,  
 Except, like them, thou too canst say,  
 My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,  
 Imaginations calm and fair,  
 The memory like a cloudless air,  
 The conscience as a sea at rest ;

But when the heart is full of din,  
 And doubt beside the portal waits,  
 They can but listen at the gates,  
 And hear the household jar within.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *In Memoriam*, xciv.

3. *I believe that there is remission of sins.* What is the connection of this clause with the context? If we could take the last clause to imply "a participation in sacraments" there would be an obvious connection, as there is in the clause of our Nicene Creed: "I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins"; but even if not, it links on with the doctrine about the Church; for it is in the Church, as the body of Christ, as the home of the Holy Spirit, that there is such a thing as forgiveness, and nowhere else. Where else can we look for it? Nature does not forgive. Storms are succeeded by calm; but the consequences of the storm are not undone. Ruins may be concealed by the kindly veil that time throws over them; but the ruins are there. And men no less bear along with them through life the marks of the devastation wrought by past storms, in the ruins of what once was a noble building. Moreover, there may, from the first, be misdirected growth.

In a forest, among many trees,  
Scarce one of all is found that hath made good  
The virgin pattern of its slender wood,  
That curtesied in joy to every breeze.  
But scathed, but knotted trunks that raise on high  
Their arms in stiff contortion, strained and bare.

Nicodemus spoke as a man of much experience when he said to Christ, "How can a man be

born again when he is old?” How can any man undo the use which is second nature?

And yet if there is one thing the Gospel stories make luminously plain, it is that Christ had power to forgive sins. Just as certainly as He summoned the blood back to the heart and the strength back to the limbs, so He gave to the spirit a principle of new life. “Son, thy sins are forgiven thee.” And He gave this greatest of all His powers to His Church—“Whose sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them.”

How can we remit sins? St. Paul tells us of himself: “If I have forgiven any, I have forgiven him in the person of Christ.” In other words, we must have in our hearts Christ’s love for men and Christ’s loathing for sin; and we must draw the sinner out of his sin by our love, which he will understand to be Christ’s. The Church, because it has the Holy Spirit of Christ, can minister Christ’s forgiveness, which is always of the nature of healing; and so is the principle of a new life. To believe that there is forgiveness of sins should be to every Christian a call to bring sinners in touch with the Great Physician, and, as far as they themselves can, to minister His forgiveness.

4. *I believe that there is a resurrection of the body.* This article is one of extreme interest,



because it contains an alteration (the only alteration), introduced into the ancient Creed by our Reformers. The original has "resurrection of the flesh"—the form of the confession still preserved in the Baptismal Office; so that the alteration may have been made without any definite intention beyond that of using an equivalent term, which has the authority of Scripture. We may be glad of a change which does bring our confession into harmony with Scripture, and does not even seem to commit us to a belief in the resurrection of our actual flesh and bones and blood.

The reason for the use of the very precise word *flesh* in the ancient Creed was two-fold. It was aimed at the heretics who thought of the flesh as evil. Their idea of redemption was to escape from the flesh altogether. And this idea of the necessarily evil nature of the flesh had sometimes the practical consequence that men did not mind polluting still further what they regarded as in itself irredeemable. In the double interest, therefore, of purity of life, and of attacking a false spirituality, the Church used the strongest word that could be found; explaining, at the same time, that the flesh would suffer at the Resurrection that glorious change which St. Paul announced. The word "flesh" was chosen

rather than “body,” because it was found that the heretics could, in some sense, accept the word “body.” But it is dangerous to go beyond what is written, even in the highest interest ; and we may be grateful that in both the creeds used in our daily services the word “flesh” has disappeared.

But whatever form of words we employ—the resurrection of the *dead*, of the *flesh*, of the *body*—we must go for their interpretation back to the Sacred Scripture. And especially we must go to the great chapter in 1 Corinthians, so familiar to all of us from its use in our Burial Office. And here, if we cling to the use of the word “flesh,” we are taught that all flesh is not the same flesh ; if we use the word “body,” we are taught the same truth—that there are heavenly bodies as well as earthly. The recognition of these differences between flesh and flesh, and body and body, will prepare us for the far greater difference between a body which is natural and a body which is spiritual. A spiritual body—could there be a greater paradox ? The two things are so far apart that they cannot be thought of together. Yes, St. Paul would say, but look at the familiar paradox of the change that passes over a seed. The old body breaks up and decays ; a new and glorious body is

prepared for the living principle. That image may help us to realise how a body is still necessary in the new life—as a means of self-expression; but the new body must answer to its new environment. A natural body is for a natural world, a spiritual body for a spiritual world. We can say nothing about it but that it will not be flesh and blood, which belongs to this life merely; plainly flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. And so there was something to be said for the heretics who objected, in face of this verse of St. Paul, to the word *flesh* in their Creed.

What we really mean, then, by this profession of belief in the resurrection of the body is that complete identity is preserved between the human being before and after death, and not “identity” only, but “personality.” There is no reabsorption into a general soul, as the Manicheans held; we look forward to the perfection of each single person in the completed Church of Christ: “May the God of peace,” says St. Paul, “sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit, and soul, and body be preserved *entire and blameless* at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”; *i.e.* may your nature be perfected in every sense—losing nothing but its sin.

5. The Creed as at first compiled concluded

with the belief in the *resurrection of the flesh*; but before very long it was felt necessary to add some final expression of Christian faith in the life of blessedness beyond the resurrection, and this was well and simply done in the New Testament phrase, “eternal life,” or, as our Creed has it, “life everlasting.” With the New Testament to refer to, we are in no danger of explaining “everlasting life” to mean simply a “life that lasts for ever,” as though its everlastingness were its chief quality; it is everlasting only because it has that belonging to it which cannot be destroyed, and it is this indestructible element which forms its chief quality and its blessedness; viz. that it is life in Christ through the Holy Spirit in the presence of the Father. “We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true. This is the true God and *eternal life*.”<sup>1</sup>

Eternal life, therefore, is not merely “the life of the world to come,” it is also the real life of this world, although at present our knowledge of Him that is true and our communion in Him that is true are very imperfect. “Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know as I

<sup>1</sup> 1 John v. 20.

am known.”<sup>1</sup> Still, even now the pure in heart have the beatific vision.

And so we come in the close of our Creed to an expression of our belief in the reasonableness of our belief, nay, of its necessity to our very life; it is, we say, our true *life*. To believe in God, to know Him that is true, as Jesus Christ revealed Him, and to be in Him that is true, by the Holy Spirit—this, we say, is the real life of man, and the permanent life; “the life eternal and everlasting.” All else must pass: “this world passeth away, and even the desire of this world passeth away; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xiii. 12.









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